

Delaware Division of the Arts

Delaware State Arts Council Meeting Minutes
March 20, 2013
11 a.m. to 2 p.m.
DE State University, MLK Student Center

Attending: Council: Lise Monty, chair, Joann Browning, Lori Crawford, Richard Givens II, Margaret Johnson, Gail Lear, Jon Newsom, John Sarro, Ruth Sokolowski, Mack Wathen, Carson Zullinger, Ralph Kuebler

Staff: Paul Weagraff, Susan Salkin, Terry Plummer, Sheila Ross, Kristin Pleasanton, Roxanne Stanulis, Dana Wise, Erica Lokai (DSU Student Intern)

Absent: Elisabeth Poole, Carol Rothschild, Jon Newsom, Catherine Walls, Rebecca Moore

The meeting was called to order at 11:05 a.m.

Minutes were approved from the December 19, 2012 Council meeting.

Chair's Report

- The presentation to the Joint Finance Committee on February 12th went well. It was organized by the DAA. There were about 20 of arts advocates there to represent the Arts. The Power Point presentation to the JFC was posted on the DAA website.
- Lise Monty and Paul Weagraff attended the Wilmington Renaissance Corporation's 'Big Ideas Session' where the goal is to help boost the arts organizations in Wilmington. Some of the ideas will be put together and presented to the community leaders.
- Poetry Out Loud was great and received good coverage in the newspaper. Laura Scanlan of the NEA was present.
- Gail Lear is assisting with getting new Council members to replace three outgoing members. So far only two potentially viable candidates have arisen from the pool of people who applied. Monty urged Council members to think about possible candidates and be proactive in encouraging them to apply. The nominating committee will recommend the reappointment of Cathy Walls to a 2nd term.
- Weagraff has a summary of the history of the Council and its relationship to the division and a Power Point orientation that he will distribute to Council members.

Director's Report

Artist Roster

The Artist Roster has been launched, and artists are entering information into the system. Once a critical mass of artists is in there, we will be promoting the site to the general public for those looking for artists/performers. www.de.gov/artistroster

FY2014 and Sequestration

NEA is scheduled to take a \$7.3 million reduction, 5% of the agency's overall budget as established by the current Continuing Resolution. This reduction must be applied to both the agency's budget for direct grants and grants to state arts agencies and regional arts organizations (79% of the agency's budget), as well as against NEA's program support and administrative budget (21% of the agency's budget). By applying funds that were de-obligated in the prior year, NEA is currently forecasting an effective decrease of 2.7% (~\$20,000 for Delaware) against the total funding provided under the current continuing resolution for NEA FY2013 partnership awards.

Additionally, we do know that sequestration will not affect NEA FY2012 Partnership Agreements that are currently funding states' and regions' FY2013 activities.

The current Continuing Resolution funding the federal government is set to expire on March 27, 2013, thus Congress must take additional action to fund the federal government for the remainder of FY2013.

Poetry Out Loud

The 8th Annual Poetry Out Loud state finals were held at the Smyrna Opera House on Wednesday, March 6th. Eleven high school finalists participated. Freshman Jordan McMillan from Sanford School won the competition and will represent Delaware in the national finals in Washington DC in April. A posting of all the participants is available on our website at www.artsdel.org/poetryoutloud. The event was covered by *The News Journal*, *Delaware State News*, and *Dover Post*. This is the best coverage this annual event has received to date.

InWilmington Campaign and the Williams Administration

The InWilmington Advisory Group has met with City of Wilmington representatives (Kenny Briscoe, Director of Communications and Cultural Affairs; and Lenny Sophrin, Director of Policy) to present the InWilmington marketing campaign. Early indications suggest a keen interest in supporting and expanding the campaign as part of a strategy to better market Wilmington and improve its image.

Update on Council Nominations

Three positions need to be filled: Ruth Sokolowski, Carson Zullinger, Elisa Poole. The nomination committee has reviewed applications submitted to the Boards & Commissions Office, and a few more are expected to be submitted by April 1. The goal is to have all three positions appointed in time for the June Council meeting. Cathy Walls is also eligible for a second term, and she will be recommended for a second term.

National Arts Program

In connection with the National Arts Program exhibition, the images were posted on the state's [Flickr page](#) and the Division's [Facebook page](#). An email went out to all state employees on Friday, March 8th, inviting them to view the virtual exhibition. Since the email was sent out, the Flickr page has received more than 22,000 views, with the peak number occurring the day the email went out. The Division's Facebook page also received an additional 107 "Likes," an increase of nearly 18%.

For your calendar

April 8-9, 2013: National Arts Advocacy Day – Washington, DC
June 19, 2013: DSAC Meeting – Buena Vista, 10am – 2pm
September 14, 2012: IAF Reception – Biggs Museum, Dover; 11am – 1pm
October 28, 2013: Arts Summit 2013 – Dover Downs Hotel and Casino

Clear Space Theatre Report – Wesley Paulson (Interim Director) and Kay Ryan (Board Chair)

Kay Ryan - About a year ago Clear Space was "not in a good space." The executive director resigned in January. Thanks to DSAC for providing a contractor (Pam Leland) to consult with and advise the board as to our options. Her assessment was very grim. However, instead of closing the company, the board decided to see if we could save the company.

- We cut the staff in half which significantly reduced overhead and fixed cost expenses.
- We focused on reducing our aging accounts payable and during this year we were able to reduce the accounts payable by 50%.
- We imposed cost restraints on operations that, if properly managed, would not undermine product or service quality.

- DDOA also gave us a technical grant to provide a technical director and Wesley Paulson was hired last January.
- We were able to match the money from the grant (which was one of the requirements for the grant). We sent a letter notifying the community and raised \$29,000 as a result.
- Another condition was to strengthen the board and we are complying. We now have more board members with higher credentials and skills. The work of adding more skills to the board continues...we now have ten members and want to get to thirteen.
- We know that more changes are needed and we're moving ahead cautiously learning from lessons of the past.

Wesley Paulson – We continue to run the operation very leanly and efficiently. We hope to make a transition back to staff-assumed duties as we build back up.

- We raised \$7,000 by having a preview of the upcoming season.
- Our budget projection is for a \$91,000 surplus which will pay off the rest of our accumulated accounts payable and get us back up to break-even and running ahead while also beginning to strengthen the balance sheet.
- We're providing education services under a 21st Century education grant.
- We have partnerships with the Schwartz Center, Freeman Stage and Rehoboth Museum that are working out well.
- We're bringing people in on an 'as needed' basis instead of keeping them on full staff.
- We're still paying down credit cards (w/ high interest rates) that were used in the past for the business.
- Most of our debt will be paid by the end of the year.
- We have a new manager for the thrift store and have changed the staffing.

Council members commented on Clear Space board's progress and offered encouragement.

DE Symphony Orchestra Report – Ellen Roberts (Development Director), Diane Milburn (General Manager) and Rich Fischer (Board Vice Chairman & Director of the re-launch initiative).

We are bouncing back from bankruptcy and closure in large part thanks to the DDOA and DSAC for helping with financial issues. Presented below is a summary of our progress to date.

Leadership

- New leadership (Board and staff) has been in place since August 2012 (7 months).
- Board responsibilities and expectations have been conveyed in writing to each Board member.
- Committees have been reconstituted and are meeting regularly.
- By-laws review is underway.
- Board will participate in DANA's Board training.

Program

- Abbreviated 2012-2013 season reflects budgetary restrictions and lack of an agreement with the musicians' union until October 2012 (this temporary agreement expires May 31, 2013).
- Classical concerts now performed at Tatnall School in addition to The Grand Opera House.
- Saturday evening performances replaced with Sunday afternoon performances.
- Slight increase in ticket prices to \$60 (\$3 to \$5 increase).
- Discontinued widespread use of discounted and free tickets.
- Soloists selected primarily from DSO's own pool of talented musicians (\$124,000 cost savings).
- Revenue from ticket sales expected to exceed FY 2013 budget.

FY 2014

- 2013 – 2014 season in flux pending new agreement with musicians' union.
- Projected FY 2014 budget and plans are subject to change.

In FY2011 miscommunication about pledge accounting created an illusion of fiscal strength.

- \$1 million was pledged to the DSO, to be made in four equal payments spread over four years.
- The first \$250,000 payment against the pledge was received, while the full amount of the pledge was recorded in revenue, per accounting rules.
- Absent the effects of pledge accounting, changes in cash flow and net assets continued to reflect a deteriorating financial position.

After the organization representatives left, Council had a brief discussion on their status prompted by Rick Givens asking about staff having any feedback regarding the DSO and Clear Space reports:

- Salkin – DSO has been keeping her in the loop and meet with her occasionally so she's been following their progress. Salkin said it's clear from what they presented today that they're working really hard to address their management and financial issues. They certainly seem to be taking a lot of steps in the right direction. There's still a lot of work to be done so it remains to be seen what the symphony will look like five years from now. The Division is sending a number of people out to do on-sites this spring but we haven't had a chance as a staff/council to assess the artistic quality of this abbreviated season yet.
- Weagraff – Affirmed that the very short-term intent in supporting them this year was to prevent complete implosion of either organization. They both continue to face major challenges which we are hopeful are not insurmountable. There appear to be positive signs from both and also some significant challenges yet to be met. Division staff have heard anecdotally, for both organizations, that it's been a strain not only in terms of management but also on artistic production. In addition to administrative changes, they've also had changes in artistic leadership and participation of performing artists. Early signs indicate that they're both on the right track.
- Plummer – In working with Clear Space, if the Division hadn't designated this specific grant for replacing their executive director, they would not have done it and wouldn't have made the progress they're making now, and they are grateful. They do have some considerable problems, but they also have excessive optimism. Their board was partially to blame for not demanding the information that it should have had and they've tried to make up for that lack of oversight by showing renewed dedication to the organization. Kay Ryan has been board chair for at least the last three years and was on the board for a couple of years before that.
- Council member comments:
 - In light of the cut in funding at NEA, and the number of applications that we have, and the larger requests we have, we need to be very prudent in where we allocate our money.
 - If we keep the pressure on and see progress in the right direction (I don't want to see them fail) we need to give them time to turn around.
 - They are headed in the right direction but they both have a long way to go.
 - I think we help them by asking for updates frequently because it keeps the pressure on them to accomplish tasks faster.

LUNCH

Susan Salkin: Report on FY2014 Grant Applications

- eGrant application process went smoothly (although we had to extend the deadline until midnight due to a breakdown in Bromelkamp's network)
- General Operating Support (GOS) – this is the first year everyone is on the two-year cycle and interim reports (66) were completed which will be reviewed without panels and done in-house by staff.
- Arts Stabilization Fund (ASF) – 8 applicants requesting a total of \$119,000. Of those there are 2 projects that didn't meet the eligibility criteria.
- Education Resource (EDR) – 11 applications with total request of \$153,000.

Delaware Division of the

- Project Support (PS) from Community Based Organizations – 33 applications (*a record number*) with total request of \$354,287
 - 7 of them are new
 - 2 are not eligible
 - From FY2011 to FY2014 the request amount has more than doubled from \$158,542 to \$354,287
 - There's been an increase in the number of grant applications
 - Some of the new organizations requested very large amounts of money
 - Some organizations grant requests doubled from what they did previously (*avg. PS grant request was \$5,000 in 2013 and the avg. request this year is nearly \$9,000*) and in many cases it doesn't seem as though the increase in requested amounts is related to them doing anything new
 - Going forward we may look into other possibilities such as:
 - capping the request amount
 - limiting the number of multiple applications from a single organization
 - changing the process for reviewing smaller requests
- Panel reviews will be at the new Dover Public Library
 - Education Resource and Arts Stabilization are on May 7th
 - Project Support is on May 14th
 - There are no General Operating Support panels this year

Guillermina Gonzalez – Executive Director of DE Arts Alliance (DAA)

- DAA launch of the “Arts Mean Business” campaign = “Arts & Economic Prosperity Report” on October 2nd was very successful.
- Dialogue continues with monthly meetings in each county.
- JFC hearings on February 9th went very well.
 - Jennifer Boland, Lucretia Young, Henry Cox and Lori Crawford offered to present the case for arts funding in DE
 - Sen. Bushweller suggested a different approach.
 - Carrie Gray, DAA Advocacy Chair presented.
 - Slide presentation reflected a statewide approach.
 - Flat funding to the arts is expected
- Longwood Foundation \$75k challenge grant completed
 - DAA hired part-time administrative assistant – Nivea Mercado
 - ED becomes full time in August 2013 – Guillermina Gonzales
- DAA appointed new members to the board of directors in January
 - Ginger Angstadt, DE State Univ. teacher and Dover resident
 - Marc Ostroff, marketing entrepreneur living in Dover
 - Dr. George Watson, UD Dean of Arts & Sciences
- National Arts Advocacy Day in Washington, DC is on April 9th.
 - DAA State Arts Captain coordinating the delegation
 - Council presence as arts leaders is needed!
- Future meetings
 - April 16th in Kent County at DE State University at 5pm
 - Scott Angelucci is sharing their Milford, DE successful story
 - May 8th in Sussex County at Rehoboth Art League at 5pm
 - Sussex arts organization assessment
 - Building arts supporter from the grassroots

Paul Weagraff – March Video series (Arts Education and Arts Impact)

- Collaboration between a small group of DSAC members, Sharon Baker and ContentDelaware to develop a series of 4-5 minute videos featuring arts organizations and the impact they have on their community.

- Sharon Baker also developed a 4-part video series for ContentDelaware featuring 4 different arts education programs throughout the state that are reaching primarily underserved youth. Each video is about 3-5 minutes.
 - Inner City Cultural League, Rehoboth Art League, Christina Cultural Arts Center and El Centro Cultural are featured
 - The videos are set up in such a way that the organizations can embed them in their own websites
 - Governor Markell made an introductory video to the series
- Sharon Baker has worked out an arrangement with Delmarva Broadcasting to feature our videos on WDEL using 30-second audio clips

Kristin Pleasanton

- **2013 Arts Summit update**
 - Date is October 28, 2013
 - Theme is "Mission Possible"
 - Keynote is Richard Blanco who was the inaugural poet for President Obama (2nd Term)
 - Topics: Future of the Arts, Creative Placemaking, Virtual Crowd Funding, Digital Marketing Strategies, American for the Arts partnership movement, and more to come
 - Susan Salkin will be coordinating Council volunteers for the summit
- **National Arts Program**
 - Exhibit held in DE State University art gallery
 - Open to current state employees and their families
 - There are 208 pieces from artists representing 74 different state agencies
 - Rebecca Moore is the project manager
 - Erica Lokai (intern & DSU student) assisted and photographed all of the artwork and uploaded to Flickr
 - Roxanne Stanulis handled the PR and communications
 - 16 awards presented totaling \$2400 in prizes
 - The exhibit is posted on our Facebook page
 - Some of the artwork is for sale and they have price tags

Erica Lokai – speaking on National Arts Program and the Gallery

- This show has really reflected on the university because the English teachers have had their students do descriptive writing on individual pieces.
- The Intro to Art classes have used the exhibit to teach about different types of media in one collection.
- I was able to encourage young people to try out for scholastics to show that there are other types of contests that they can enter into.

Motion to adjourn – Seconded – meeting adjourned 2:08 p.m.

A tour of DE State University Art Gallery to see the NAP state employee exhibition following the Council meeting.

Appended notes on Clear Space Theatre submitted after the Council meeting (3/25/2013)

- \$6,000 loan – This is the balance due on a \$10,000 loan made by a current director. It is and has been paid off in part by donations and in part by tuition offsets for classes being attended by the director (e.g. LEGENDS). Future donation offsets are yet to be decided. The tuition offsets are being tracked carefully.
- \$2,000 loan – This is the amount owed to a former director made as part of a package of loans made by directors to underwrite the costs of opening the thrift shop (ENCORE). This will be

repaid per agreement with the former director sometime after the 2013 summer repertory. The balance of the package of loans has either been paid off or converted to donations. This is the only amount still outstanding on the loans made to underwrite the opening of ENCORE.